



## The power of music!

ROBERT G. BOER (92)

*"Ah, music! What a beautiful art! But what a wretched profession."* -Georges Bizet

Music is a powerful medium of expression, with the ability to describe the human condition as nothing else in this world. Everyone in our society has some exposure to music, from omni-present *muzak*, with its intent to set a mood, to formal concerts where the performer can interact with the listener. Everyone has their own preferred style(s) of music, but few can explain precisely why a specific song or style of music moves them. Music has the unique ability to affect the emotional, intellectual, and physical, somehow connecting them with the spiritual. It is that ability which can also draw us closer to God in worship and in our day to day lives.

A number of Redeemer College alumni have dedicated significant parts of their lives to this attractive yet elusive venture. They have sought to make a living producing an intangible product in a society that values practical, realistic careers. Cynthia Chhina, Darrin Berg, Marvin Oldejans, and Ruth Ann Schuringa are involved in different areas of music and in different capacities, but all recognize the power of music.

Three major historical influences may have led to the struggle some have in justifying music as a career. For some, their Calvinist roots make a career in music difficult.

Calvin's de-emphasis of the role of music in worship meant that those interested in a music career would have to find employment outside the area of corporate worship. Also, beginning with the "Romantic" period of music (beginning in the early 19th century) musicians had to make a living on their own. Prior to this point, musicians had benefactors, such as Mozart's early work for the Archbishop of Salzburg or Haydn's employment in the court of Hungarian prince Nikolaus Esterházy. The concept of the "starving musician" whose struggle for survival provided the angst for their music, was propagated by the likes of Franz Schubert (1797-1828), who sold some of the best loved songs in history for bits of bread. Third, many alumni are from immigrant families, whose parents' or grandparents' struggle to make ends meet left little time for the "frivolous," such as the arts.

Those involved in church music often find themselves in a difficult position. They know what music can do to enhance worship, and would dedicate themselves to making worship services a powerful experience. Unfortunately, however, they find their churches

unwilling to support their efforts. In many Christian Reformed churches for example, music is one of the lowest priorities. Well-trained musicians with years of experience find themselves being asked to serve with only an honorarium or nothing at all. It is very frustrating to have the gifts and yet realize one

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Robert Boer

cannot support oneself with a calling in music.

Ruth Ann Schuringa (Dykstra '89) serves as worship coordinator at Bethel CRC in Waterdown, Ontario. She sees the possibilities of corporate worship when thoughtful planning is applied to all aspects of a service, something that requires a great deal of time, talent and energy. Unfortunately, it is part of her heritage to think that being a musician is just an "add-on" to a pastor's role, or just a hobby. She is paid an honorarium for her work (6-10 hours per week), but many in the church still feel she should volunteer her gifts as an elder or a Sunday School teacher would. Being the pastor's wife doesn't help her situation; how convenient to hire a pastor and get a musician for free as part of the deal! This despite her Bachelor's degree in music and significant extra training in church music, choral conducting, and vocal and organ performance. "I struggle with asking the church for money," she writes. "I feel like I'm begging! And yet I want people to believe in the legitimacy of a career in church music. Other

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Cynthia Chhina teaches a student.

## IMAGES

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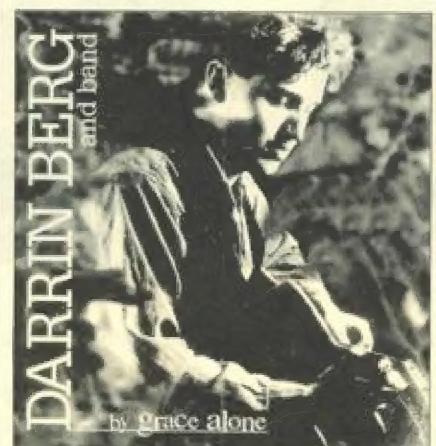
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# Music

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denominations would take me on staff much quicker than the CRC (especially in Canada)."

Marvin Oldejans '87 works as a part-time singer/songwriter who also finds a career in music out of reach. He sees the power of the discipline, how it can touch people on an emotional and spiritual level that other things cannot. "Everyone thinks music is important and most people have a deep love for it...but when it comes down to money, music is often seen as an extraneous item."



Darrin Berg's CD "By Grace Alone." To order a copy, call Darrin at (905) 264-0676.

The lack of financial support for the industry makes it difficult to balance the hard work necessary to make it in music while holding down a part-time job so that one can put food on the table. "[The music business] is very competitive and unless you are famous or have found a niche with a certain audience, people don't want to pay much to hear you play and sing."

Darrin Berg (x93) has performed all across Canada, written over 500 songs, and is set to return to the studio to produce a second CD of his music. He finds that it was difficult at first to be taken seriously as a full-time musician, particularly as a Christian artist. In order to make ends meet, he attempts to treat music as any other small business: work very hard, connect with people, follow a plan both financially and musically, and strategically expose your talents to the right people and the right organizations. "My frustrations are mostly centered around the lack of support for Christian musicians in Canada. I think there's a lot of misconceptions about the Christian music industry and about the difference between music business and music ministry. It's tough to know where the difference lies, but I think people have a hard time realizing that musicians need to earn a living."

Cynthia Chhina (x86) works at the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital as a music therapist, using the power of music as a therapeutic tool to build relationships and enhance

communication. "I work primarily with adults with major mental illnesses who, due to the effects of their disorder, become extremely isolated in their very chaotic experience of their environment. Through music, their isolation decreases and they are able to experience the world in a more cohesive and controlled way because of the structure which the music can impose." Cynthia also sees the power of music in meeting the spiritual needs of her clients, which can be so appropriately addressed in a musical setting.

These Redeemer alumni have been affected by the ability of music to touch the soul, and have chosen to dedicate themselves to sharing this wonderful art with others. In spite of the struggles of being a musician in a society that takes their work for granted, or does not value their contributions, they remain committed to sharing the power of music.

*Robert G. Boer (92) earned a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from Drake University in May, 1996, and is serving as the Minister of Music at St. Olaf Lutheran Church in Fort Dodge, Iowa.*

## Have you spent time overseas?

More and more alumni are working outside of North America, in areas such as mission, relief work, and teaching English as a second language. The global village is becoming an increasingly attractive job market.

As part of its continuing series on Alumni at Work, *Images* invites those people who have worked overseas to share their experiences with fellow alumni. We would like to hear not only personal stories, but also the insights that former Redeemer students have as they adapt to work outside familiar settings. If you have been, or still are overseas, we look forward to hearing your comments on such things as:

Why did you go overseas? What were your expectations before you went, and have they been realized?

Is your first world, western, Christian education still relevant in a culture that does not hold those same values? How should Redeemer College respond to be an effective witness in an increasingly global society?

Please send your contributions to the Alumni Office at the address on the front page by January 5, 1997. We look forward to hearing from you.

## Webpage for college alumni

The Redeemer College Alumni Association is hoping to take a leap into cyberspace with the creation of its own webpage. The site would be accessed through the college's homepage, but it would contain news and information specifically for alumni, including links to alumni's personal webpages.

The Alumni Association is looking for someone with expertise in web-page design to volunteer his or her services to create the alumni web-page. Although we cannot, unfortunately, make this a paid position, there would be an honorarium available. We would like to have a one-year commitment to the project.

The alumni webmaster will work with the Alumni Office on the design and on regular updates. Because it is affiliated with the college, all editorial content would have to go through the Alumni Office.

If you are interested in constructing the

site, or would like some more information, please contact Tim Wolfert at the Alumni Office--(905) 648-2131, or e-mail: [wolfert@redeemer.on.ca](mailto:wolfert@redeemer.on.ca)

\*\*\*\*\* Until the website is up and running, you are still invited to participate in the Alumni LISTSERV. The LISTSERV is a forum for discussion by and for alumni. Topics have covered such diverse topics as the possibility of life on other planets, internet etiquette, and the impact of Redeemer's degrees in getting a job.

To participate, or even just to listen in, send an e-mail message to [majordomo@redeemer.on.ca](mailto:majordomo@redeemer.on.ca). Leave the subject line blank, and in the message body type **subscribe alumni**. You will receive a message shortly thereafter with a welcome and further instructions. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

# Redeemer College Alumni Choir: Where do we go from here?

The tradition of an alumni choir at Redeemer College is still a young one, having had its existence for only four years, and yet its presence is already becoming an important part of the Redeemer community.

Out of the initiative of Dr. Christian Teeuwsen and his wife Rebecca, the first Alumni Choir concerts featured various choral works, as well as solo performances by various alumni. Since these beginnings, the Redeemer College Alumni Choir has had the privilege of joining forces with the Concert Choir for the past two years, coming to a stunning climax with the performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* this past April.

And then the question surfaced: Where do we go from here? The Alumni choir found itself facing a significant step either towards growth or extinction. If the choir was to continue to grow in both calibre and reputation, the motivation for such growth must come from its members, with ownership being placed on those involved.

Following the performance of *Elijah*, a small committee of four alumni choir members was formed, and out of this committee came the establishment of the Redeemer College Alumni Choir Association (RCACA). The goal of the RCACA will be to establish an organization of alumni choir members with the intent of eventually becoming an auto-

nous body of Redeemer Alumni.

In the near future, the Choir Association will have separate funding from the college and the established alumni, with further hopes of being able to donate back to the college and the greater Christian education community. Anyone who has participated in the Redeemer College Concert Choir for a minimum of one year will be part of the RCACA. These alumni are not obligated to join the actual Alumni Choir, but they will be kept informed as to the Association's progress.

Lofty goals? Perhaps... but as one member of the committee stated, "You don't get big by dreaming small." The RCACA has the foundation of a strong choral tradition on which to build, and is now reaching out to its members and potential members to shape the future of the Alumni Choir.

And now the question remains: Where do we go from here? A concert date in May 1998 has been set; music has already been chosen; letters informing Alumni Choir members of rehearsals in the coming months went out, and the choir had its inaugural rehearsal on September 20.

The challenge lies open to all potential Alumni Choir members: Where do YOU want the Redeemer College Alumni Choir to go from here?

## YEARBOOKS!

The 1997 yearbooks have arrived. If you have not received your copy or would like to order the '97 yearbook (or any previous books), please contact Brenda Heyink at (905) 304-5101 or [bheyink@redeemer.on.ca](mailto:bheyink@redeemer.on.ca).



## STRANGER IN THE LAND

Auditions for the spring touring production of *Stranger in the Land* will be held toward the end of November on campus. Alumni actors and technicians are encouraged to make an appointment to audition for the company to fill a limited number of positions. The tour will begin April 27, 1998 in London's Althouse Theatre, and then travel through Sarnia, Blyth, Owen Sound, Newmarket and Mississauga, concluding May 8. Contact Ray Louter for more information.

## Zuidema-- a leader in many ways

The Alumni Association congratulates Sandra (Klapwyk) Zuidema, the 1997 recipient of the Alumni Leadership Award (ALA). A third-year student from Elora, Ontario, Sandra is in the Concurrent Elementary Education program, with a major in Art, and a minor in English. After graduation she hopes to teach, perhaps in a mission school overseas, and her long-term plans also include graduate school and running a small art gallery.



Sandra Zuidema

Much--but by no means all--of Sandra's involvement has been related to art. Besides being curator of the art gallery this past year, she has also been assistant curator, and she has led the art forum. Sandra has also been a member of the Redeemer College Concert Choir and Double Quartet, gone on Project SERVE to Haiti, been a FROG leader and has been a care-giver for a developmentally-challenged boy.

The Alumni Association sponsors this award not only to reward students who have provided leadership, but also to encourage their involvement with the Alumni Association after graduation. The Alumni Board received nine very deserving applications, and those who ranked the applications found it to be both a very difficult and rewarding task.

"There is just so much talent and desire to serve among Redeemer students," said Rob Janssens about the applicant pool.

Ruth Ann Schuringa agreed. "It was tough to choose between the candidates. Everyone was so deserving."

Congratulations, Sandra! We pray that you will continue to serve the Lord and Redeemer College with all of your gifts.

## PERSONAL TOUCH

## ► Colin (86) and Anita (Riebot, 88)

Vander Ploeg live in Edmonton, Alberta. Colin has accepted a call to serve as pastor at Trinity CRC in Edmonton. He will be examined by Classis Alberta North in October, the Lord willing, in order to be ordained to ministry. Anita & Colin and their three boys look forward to settling down in Edmonton. They live at 6718 162A Ave., Edmonton, AB T5Z 3C7 (403) 473-8066. Email: ploegman@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca

## ► David (96) and Lori-Anne (Stegeman, 96) Kerkhof live in Burlington, Ontario. Dave was given a position in April (97) with the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police Service as a Police Constable. Lori-Anne works for the Bank of Montreal in Niagara-on-the-Lake as a Customer Service Representative. They live at 1008-3020 Glencrest Rd., Burlington, ON L7N 2H2 (905) 634-7270.

## ► Sean (93, 94) and Melanie Schat are very excited to welcome Aydan Frederick Prinzen Schat (born April 1997) to their family. Sean and Mel have recently moved to Beamsville. Sean will start his 4th year of teaching at John Knox Memorial Christian School in Fruitland while Mel is enjoying her time with Aydan. They live at 4257 Crescent Ave., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B8 (905) 563-6212. Email: 15901@ICAN.net

## ► James (87) and Grace (Sikma, 89) Pot recently moved further south from Edmonton to Red Deer, Alberta, along with their three sons Jared (6), Lucas (4) and Eric (2). James is working at First CRC in Red Deer. Grace takes care of the homefront. They live at 135 Anders Close, Red Deer, AB T4R 1C2 (403) 346-7193.

## ► After teaching grade 2 for 3 years in Clinton, ON Trudy Rintjema (87) married her husband Dave and moved to Chatham. Since then, the Lord has blessed them with three wonderful daughters, Laura (4 1/2), Melanie (3) and Andrea (1). They live at R.R. #3, Chatham, ON N7M 5J3 (519) 354-2091.

## ► Jessica Brooks (94) lives at 9 Ted Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 1E6 (905) 934-0248.

► Ken (90) and Debbie DeVries are pleased with the launch of the first edition of The Shepherd's Guide for the Greater London Area. The publication of this Christian business and ministry directory is Ken's second successful business launch since Redeemer. Additional thanks be to God for His continuing healing hand on Debbie. Ken was also a candidate for the Christian Heritage

Party in the June 2 Federal election. They live at 13 Mandeville Rd., St. Thomas, ON N5R 4H7 (519) 633-1238.

► Andrew Vreugdenhil (X90, BSc Queens 92) and Karen Bisschop (92, MLIS McGill 94) are pleased to announce the successful completion of Andrew's PhD in Inorganic Chemistry at McGill University last June. Andrew and Karen plan to stay in Montreal for the time being where he is currently employed as a postdoctoral researcher in the Mining and Metallurgical Engineering Department at McGill and she works as a librarian for Transport Canada. They live at 3620 Hutchison St., Apt. #9, Montreal, PQ H2X 2H3 (514) 281-1587.

► Rob (87) and Fran Duiker with their three children, Bethany (11), Thomas (9) and Preston (7) have recently moved from cold Northern BC to warm Zuni, New Mexico, USA, where Rob has taken a position of Principal/Teacher/Missionary at Zuni Christian School. Hearing from former classmates or colleagues would be great, but the most excellent thing that can be done is praying for their ministry among the Zuni people. Their mailing address is Box 445, Zuni, New Mexico, USA 87327 (505) 782-2287.

► Peter Bakker (x85) and his wife have been living in Brampton for a year and a half, but moved back to Orangeville. Peter is working at IC Controls and has been there for 9 years. Their second son, Benjamin Martin Alexander was born September 30 last year. They live at 43 Bellevue Dr., Orangeville, ON L9W 1R1 (519) 940-4594. Email: pbakker@headwaters.com.

► Paul (97) and Jessica (VanGurp, 97) VandenBrink have recently moved to the

Philadelphia area where Paul will be studying at Westminster Theological Seminary and Jessica will be working as the women's middle and high school health teacher at Phil-Mont Christian Academy.

► Meredith Dykstra (94) is currently teaching at Hillcrest School in Nigeria through Christian Reformed World Missions. She can be sent mail via the CRC offices in Grand Rapids at Meredith Dykstra - CRWM Nigeria 2850 Kalamazoo Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

► Maureen Elgersman (90) graduated from Clark Atlanta University with a Doctor of Arts degree in July. She is now at the University of Southern Maine holding a joint position as Assistant Professor of History and Faculty Scholar for the African American Archives. Her new address is Department of History, University of Southern Maine, 37 College Ave., Gorham, Maine 04038. Telephone: (207) 780-5239; e-mail: Elgersma@usm.maine.edu.

► Michael Brinkman (95) is currently in Japan, again, working in the middle of nowhere and loving it. His bosses are Christians and he is getting along very well with everyone. He thought life would be duller after Redeemer, but it is not. The only difference is, he gets more sleep and drives a four wheel drive jeep-like Pajero instead of a battered blue milk truck van. It is also so much harder to find Christian friends, but in all things the Lord is richly providing. He plans to stay much longer in Japan this time. He can be reached at: Japan T369-14, Saltama-ken, Chichibugun, Minano-machi 1262-7, Michael Brinkman. E-mail: michael.brinkman@usa.net.

## NEWS OF INTEREST

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